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ABSTRACT

As part of the National Education Association (NEA) Mastery in Learning Project, faculty and students of the Greasewood/Toyei Consolidated Boarding School developed a booklet of Navajo students' work. The purpose of the booklet is to promote better understanding of the Navajo culture. Navajo culture emphasizes respect for the earth, reverence of nature, and high regard for the elderly. The booklet describes Dine' Bizaad, the oral Navajo language and gives phonetic representations of various Navajo words. Poetry, stories, and drawings portray ceremonies, legends, beliefs, and traditions. Sections on weaving, pottery, sand painting, and toy making include lists of materials and procedures necessary to complete activities in the classroom. The final section contains recipes for traditional Navajo foods. (KS)

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NAVAJOS

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NAVAJOS

A SOURCE BOOKLET FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

An NEA Mastery In Learning Project
Prepared by the Faculty and Students of the
Greasewood/Toyei Consolidated Boarding School
Greasewood, Arizona

Published by the
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To the other 26 schools in the NEA Mastery In Learning Project, our gift to you!

The faculty and students of the Greasewood/Toyei Consolidated Boarding School

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Foreword

The NEA Mastery In Learning Project is a school-based, school improvement effort. The Project seeks to help faculties design and implement programs of exceptionally high quality for their students and to assure that these young people have the educational opportunities needed for them to become happy and productive individuals.

Greasewood, a Bureau of Indian Affairs school serving about 450 mostly bilingual students in grades K-8, helped to pilot test the program that became the Mastery In Learning Project. In September 1986, Toyei, another Navajo school, joined Greasewood to become Greasewood/Toyei Consolidated Boarding School.

During the first year of the Project at Greasewood, a group of extraordinary teachers, students, administrators, and parents helped those of us on the staff of the Mastery In Learning Project understand the Navajo world and how our multicultural world would benefit from their rich Native American traditions. By sharing with us some of the "old ways," they taught us that the qualities so deeply embedded in the Navajo culture could complement the work of other schools and other students.

The qualities so valued by the Navajo culture—respect for the earth, reverence of nature, and high regard for the elderly—are ones to which we in schools should be more attentive. To observe Navajo young people dealing with competition, with verbal language and the importance of silence, with their way of viewing the physical world as their brother and sister, and with their love of one another is an educational opportunity from which more educators should benefit.

In this wonderful little book, teachers and students can begin their understanding of how these Navajo youngsters and their parents and teachers see and treat the world. In our Project, we talk about schools that are vital, rich in important subject matter, inhabited by people who care deeply about learning and each other. The words and pictures in this book capture those goals as well as any yet written.

Robert M. McClure, *Director*
Mastery In Learning Project

Introduction

Greetings from Greasewood! We are fortunate to be working on an exciting project. Ever since the first Foxfire book came out, I have dreamed of organizing a book of Navajo students' work. I am amazed at the quality and quantity of material that was submitted to me for inclusion in this booklet, and I am sure that you will feel the same.

The inspiration for this booklet comes from sources other than Foxfire. When I first came to the Navajo Indian Reservation in Arizona, I had no conception of the nature of the culture. It is absolutely fascinating! In this culture, old traditions exist right along with Heavy Metal music and McDonalds. This booklet does not begin to explain or even to present adequately the Navajo culture. I hope it will stimulate interest and offer ideas about living and working in a unique environment with very special people.

We would like to thank the Mastery in Learning Project for assistance with this work. In addition, we would like to thank Anna David who helped edit the booklet, and Joy Newberry who typed, retyped, and re-edited with great dedication and enthusiasm. But most of all we would like to thank the students who contributed the material that made this book a reality.

Brian Newberry, *Teacher*
Greasewood/Toyei Consolidated Boarding School

A Note About the Navajo Language

The Diné Bizaad or language of The People, the language of the Navajo tribe, is a spoken, not a written language. Therefore, the attempts at spelling Navajo words in this booklet are at best approximations. The markings above, behind, and below the letters are there because it is impossible to present phonetically all of the sounds in the Navajo language with English language rules. This is because many of the sounds used in Navajo have no approximations in English.

For instance, Navajo is in part a tonal language; that is, meanings can be changed by the pitch of the sound. The apostrophe directly above the vowel (á) indicates the high sound of that vowel. If the mark is present, pronounce that sound slightly higher in pitch than the other letters. If no mark is there, pronounce it at the same pitch as all others. In addition, a comma directly under a vowel (ą) indicates a nasalized sound. This is similar to many French sounds. To pronounce this correctly, you must force the sound into the nasal passages and try to sound like you have a cold.

Another difference that can be seen in this booklet is the glottal stop. This is indicated by an apostrophe directly after a letter (t') and denotes that in order to pronounce this correctly you must stop the sound deep in the throat before its completion.

An additional technique that is used in the attempt to translate Navajo sounds is the use of double letters. Because these are attempts to translate a language phonetically, each letter or combination is pronounced. So if you see a double vowel (aa), you must sustain the length of that pronunciation longer than you would a single vowel.

Finally, when all else fails in the attempt to translate Navajo phonetically, a new letter is invented (ƒ). This sound is the hardest of all Navajo sounds for a non-Navajo to produce. It goes something like this: place your tongue against your bottom teeth and curl the tongue up so it touches the roof of your mouth just behind your top teeth. Think of saying the "th" sound with your tongue in this position, at the same time forcing air under your tongue and out the sides of your mouth by way of the curled space under your tongue!

As you can see, Navajo is a complex and interesting language. It is little wonder that the Navajo Code Talkers in World War II were able to fool all of the opposition's attempts at decoding!

Beginnings

Navajos

Together we live in peace on the Navajo land.
The animals surround us
as does the beauty in which we live.
The morning sun on the horizon,
we celebrate a new day
In harmony we greet the gods
who help us get on with our work.
But best of all,
we live in beauty.

LaDonna Lynch

Dibentsa = A big mountain sheep, the Hesperus Peak (Black—North).
Tso-Dzil = A big mountain, Mount Taylor (Blue—South).
Sisnajini = Horizontal black belt, Blanco Peak (White—East).
Dokǫ́ǫ́ sliid = Shining on top, San Francisco Peak (Yellow—West).

This is the Navajo Tribe's Great Seal. The black dots are arrowheads to protect us from harm, and the blue and red lines are a rainbow which we get from the rain. The rain is good for our land. The Navajo people like the rain because we grow corn, squash, and other vegetables. It is good for their land to be moist so the animals have enough grass to graze on and water to drink.

The four sacred mountains are similar to the arrowheads because they protect us from harm and bring lots of good sunshine.

Antonio Yazzie

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This is a picture of a Hopi Kachina doll and a hogan. The drawing of the Navajo Seal stands for peace in my opinion, and the small mountain is saying that the land is here to share. It stands for peace between Hopi and Navajo. I drew it to hopefully make people realize that other people are just as good as they are.

Shawn Bitah

Marcella Curtis

This a small picture of the Window Rock. The Window Rock is east of Ganado, Arizona, and is fairly famous. Window Rock is a national park and is part of the Four Corners area. There is a trail all the way up to the top. I don't know why there is a hole in the Window Rock, but there's a hole in it.

Marcella Curtis

Calendar

January—Yas Ni/t' ees

"Thawing of snow for water." Sheep and goats are led out of the corral every day to eat grass. At night stories and legends are told. Games are played, too.

February—Atsá Biyáázh

"The hatching of young eagles." The legends say that this is the month when the First Chief of the Winds shakes the earth and awakens the sleeping plants, the bears, the lizards, and the snakes.

March—Wóózhch'íd

"The sound of young eagles." The young eagles hatch high up on the ledges and begin to try out their voices. It is said that Blue Winds move over the earth in March bringing the first new leaves. Many lambs are born this month, and if the weather is too cold they are brought into the hogan. Fields are cleared and made ready for spring planting.

April—Tą́ą́ Chil

"The beginning of plant life." The first month of spring according to the legend. Black Wind shook the earth and made thunder. Seeds are planted when the weather is warm enough, and sheep are shorn. Part of the wool is saved for weaving. The rest is sold to the trader.

May—Tą́ą́ Tsoh

"The growth of plant life." In the old days the Navajos planted in a coil beginning in the middle of the field and going around in circles. Before the planting began, father or grandfather blessed the field and the seeds and prayed that the garden would grow well.

June—Ya'issh jáá sch ill

"The planting of the early crops." June is a happy month: corn, beans, and squash are coming up. Colts, lambs, and kids are frisking about while their mothers enjoy grazing.

July—Ya'iish jáástosoh

"The planting of the late crops." Navajos have to keep close watch over their gardens because animals, birds, and insects are determined to get their share of the garden.

August—Bini'antą́ą́ tsózi

"The maturing of early crops." It is up to the rain gods to grant a good harvest. If they are kind, they send soft gentle rains.

September—Bini'antą́ą́ tsoh

"The maturing of the late crops." The men gather the ripe corn, and the women husk and dry it. The corn kernels are mashed into a paste on the metate, rolled in corn husks, and baked under a layer of coals. When cooked, they are stored away with the melons and squash.

October—Ghaą ji'

"The dividing of the season." Summer, which has been walking forward, now meets the white of winter. Navajos hurry to finish the harvest, and families move to the foothills to be near a supply of firewood.

November—Ní/ ch'its'ó si

"Mild cold and light winds." The harvest is finished and stored away. The Nine Night Chant or the Yei bi chai Dance begins.

December—Ní/ ch'it soh

"Increasing cold and winds." The month for pit-hunting eagles. Eagles are not eaten, but are kept alive. Their feathers are used for ceremonies.

Mrs. Anna David
Fifth Grade Teacher

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Navajos

Together we live in peace on the Navajo land.
The animals surround us
as does the beauty in which we live.
The morning sun on the horizon,
we celebrate a new day.
In harmony we greet the gods
who help us get on with our work
But best of all,
we live in beauty.

Ladonna Lynch

Ancestors

At dawn
my ancestors ran.
They ran toward morning
till the sun came up.

They made food
the Navajo way.
They took out the sheep
to graze toward
the mesas
where there is
grass and water.

When evening came,
my ancestors looked for the sheep.
They went toward the mesas
and brought them back.

That is the story of my ancestors.

Cheryl Tullie

Navajo Way

If you were born in the Navajo Land,
when you get tall you have to learn
how to herd sheep and weave a rug.

You have to live in a hogan in the old ways.
Long ago they taught my great, great grandfather
to herd sheep when he was a little boy.

And my great, great grandmother, she was taught
how to weave a rug when she was a little girl.
Our ancestors sang songs when the sun set
behind the mountains. That is how we learn.

You know from our ancestors that is the way
of Navajo life.

Sampson Begay

The horned toad is my friend
he shows me about our land.
We both walk in the sun across
the land of our native people.

The yucca is used by
the Navajos in ceremonies.
Medicine man sings to cure the sick
and keep the health of their bodies.
If there wasn't one,
there would be no Navajos
on the land
only the lonely animals.
That is why we have a medicine man.
Once the people aren't sick,
they go out in the hot sun
and they hunt.
I am so glad the hunters don't
kill my friend the horned toad
for he looks after me as I walk upon
my land.

The story of the Navajo people
will always go on.
The animals will always live
happy on their beautiful land
with the Navajo.

Fonda Beatty

My Little Pony

There was a little pony
He lived on a farm
He liked to eat grass
He walked through the hills

There was a little pony
His name was Blackie
He loved his name
He would run through the hills to the horizon

There was a little pony
He had a white spot on his forehead
He had some friends
He liked kids very much

Savannah Kinlicheenie

Today and Yesterday

Tribes, tribes
long ago the tribes
of Indians were many.

And now they are becoming less.

Children and relatives
all were very happy.

Today the teepees
change into houses and
the horses change into cars.

Man and his family
are in a world full
of fear and sorrow.

The hunting grounds
no longer exist.

Today my people are
in a land of freedom. . . ?

Iva Kanuho

The Long Walk

So many years ago
there was a walk the
Indians took.
It is known as
"The Long Walk" or as
"The Trail of Tears."
During this time there were many sad happenings.
The walk was about
500 miles long.
During that time most of
the Indians died.
The story of "The Long Walk"
is very sad.

Tonya Billie

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White cow, running by the
Rocky mountain rises from the sun through
The mountain toward the river—
In a loud mood.

Charlene Spencer

Coyote

Coyote always used to lie. One day he said to Turtle, "I want to race you." He knew Turtle couldn't run fast. The other animals like the deer, rabbit, and fox could run fast so Coyote chose the turtle because he knew the turtle was slow.

The river was running by the race track. The animals decided that whoever won would get what was on the mountain. Everyone was on the turtle's side because they knew the coyote was tricky.

So they started the race. Turtle said to the coyote, "I can't run fast; I know you'll win." Coyote said, "O.K., I'll give you a head start." Turtle left. "Poor Turtle," said Coyote.

Turtle jumped in the river and swam really fast to the mountain. It was a hot day, but Turtle was cool because he was in the river. The other animals said, "Go now Coyote." Coyote said, "Poor Turtle, I know I'll win the race, I know I'll get all the meat." Coyote started to run. All the while, he kept saying, "Poor Turtle, I know I'll be the winner." Coyote ran to the mountain but Turtle was already there. Turtle was the winner and Coyote was mad!

Merlin James

The Holy People and the First Dog

Once upon a time, the Holy People lived in the East. At night the dog always barked and woke up the Holy People. One of the Holy People said, "If you bark one more time, we will kill you."

So one morning some people from the West went by the house of the Holy People. The dog didn't bark because he didn't want to die.

The Holy People got mad at the dog. But the dog said, "I didn't want to die because I was barking."

The next time some people came near where the Holy People lived, the dog barked.

Dalton Kirk

Steps in the Night

Once there was a boy named Kee. He was a poor boy. One morning his mother said: "Go to the trading post to get some bacon, beans, coffee, and sugar." Then his mother asked him to get some wood for the fire. Kee brought firewood from some dead bushes and then started on his way to the trading post.

When he got to the trading post, he did not see Mr. Burr who ran the trading post. There was a Navajo man there instead. The Navajo man asked what Kee needed, grabbed the list Kee's mother had written and said, "I will get this for you."

When he got back home, Kee's mother asked Kee to bring in more firewood. So Kee went outside and got some more firewood.

Mr. Burr came back the next day and Kee was happy. Mr. Burr came back because he missed Kee. Kee asked Mr. Burr where he had been. Mr. Burr told Kee that he had gone to visit his mother and father.

Eric Woods and
Christopher David

The Lone White Person

When I first came to school at Greasewood, being the only white person in my class was no fun. The kids would be mean to me and say stuff to me in Navajo (a language I didn't understand). One of my worst enemies then is one of my best friends now. Her name is Niketa Kirk.

Having everyone around me speak another language isn't so bad now either. They speak English also, but when they speak Navajo I can usually tell what they are saying by the way they say it.

Once the kids got used to me, they started to like me. They are people too, just like everyone else and I want to be just like them.

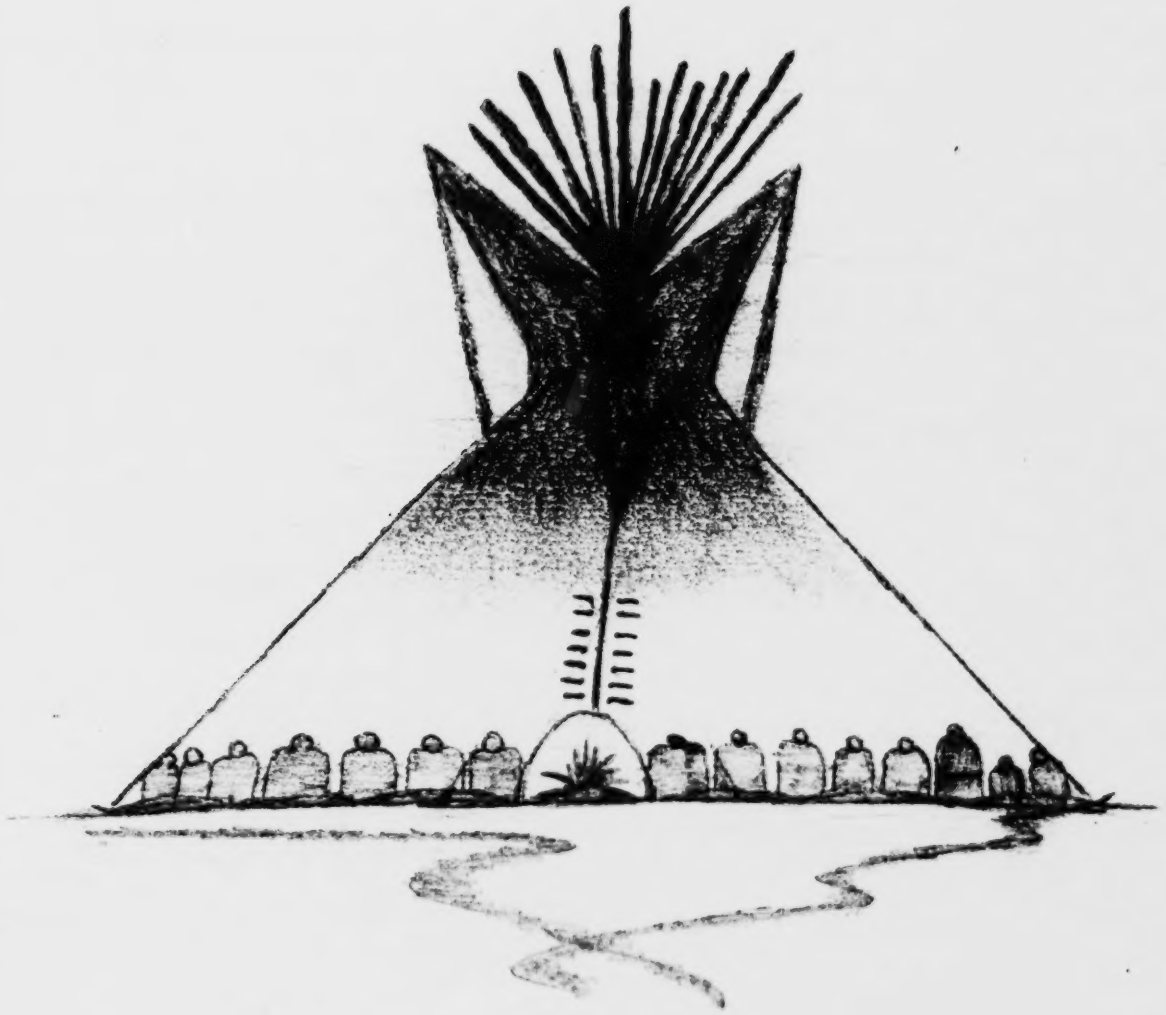
Sarah Wood

Ceremonies

This is a Navajo ceremony used to help people get well or recover from witchcraft. The eagle is the Navajo's friend; eagles give Navajos their feathers.

Anthony Long

JOSEPH CHEE



Teepees are used for ceremonies, and they are used when someone is sick. The men take medicine and smoke in the teepee. They drink water when they take the medicine.

People who go into the teepee have to eat medicine and sing some peyote songs all night. In the morning, the people don't eat until noon. Then the people eat all that they want and then go home.

Joseph Chee

Peyote Meeting

Peyote is a plant used for ceremonial purposes. When peyote is taken in the ceremony, it brings people closer to God, and it is believed to have supernatural powers. Peyote is used by many different tribes of Indians to communicate with God for their needs or to regain their health.

They beat the drum with the drum stick in order to chase the evil spirit away. They pass medicine around, and you eat some and pass it on to the next person so that they can eat some also. The medicine is strong when you eat it, and it can make you sick if you are not used to it or make you feel like you might choke on it.

All people sing a song if they know how to sing. In the middle of the night you can go outside. If you want to go outside, the Road Man asks you to walk out toward the left. The men inside sing four songs before you can go back inside.

Native American Church

The topic I am going to write about is done with great respect and is very sacred to me. This also was explained to me by my grandfather. When he told my sister and cousins about this particular subject, he explained that we should have great respect for another person's belief whatever religion he had. That is why this topic is very sacred to me and why I have great respect for religion.

The movement away from the traditional religion has been not only toward Anglo Christianity but also toward an all-Indian religion known as the Native American Church or Peyotism.

Peyote is a cactus button used in this all-night ceremony which is run by one who is called a "Road Man." Peyote is eaten ceremonially to place one in communication with God. During the ceremony, prayers are universal, seeking the blessing of all mankind.

The people in the ceremony express a feeling of helplessness and refer to mankind as "children" whom the Heavenly Father must protect. Peyote links man with God to fulfill man's needs, and man can acquire knowledge or regain his health from God.

Navajos apparently joined the peyote cult in the beginning to seek cures for diseases from which they were suffering and for which traditional ceremonies proved ineffective.

The Native American Church existed among Indians in parts of Oklahoma and in other states for many years before finally reaching Navajoland.

Dushawn Denesto

Navajo Taboos and Beliefs

These are a few of the Navajo taboos and beliefs that I remember my grandfather telling us before he became sick and had a stroke.

He told us that some legends are told only during the winter months when the thunder and the snakes are asleep. Certain stories not related to ceremonies .nay be told at any time of the year.

Formerly it was taboo for a man to look at or speak to his mother-in-law. To do so was believed to cause blindness. Today, this taboo is not strictly forbidden.

In our grandmother's day, one never pointed anything at another person. This was considered an insult. When passing a cigarette, a pencil, or anything with a point it was held upright so that neither end would point at anyone.

Gentle rain is considered fortunate, and hard rain brings unpleasant things. Many ceremonies are partly for the purpose of asking for the blessings of gentle rain.

When a baby laughs for the first time, it is given a small gift and a little feast is prepared for the family. The baby also gives out some salt from the sea along with a few food items to others who come to the feast. This is supposed to help the child to be friendly, happy, and generous as he or she grows older.

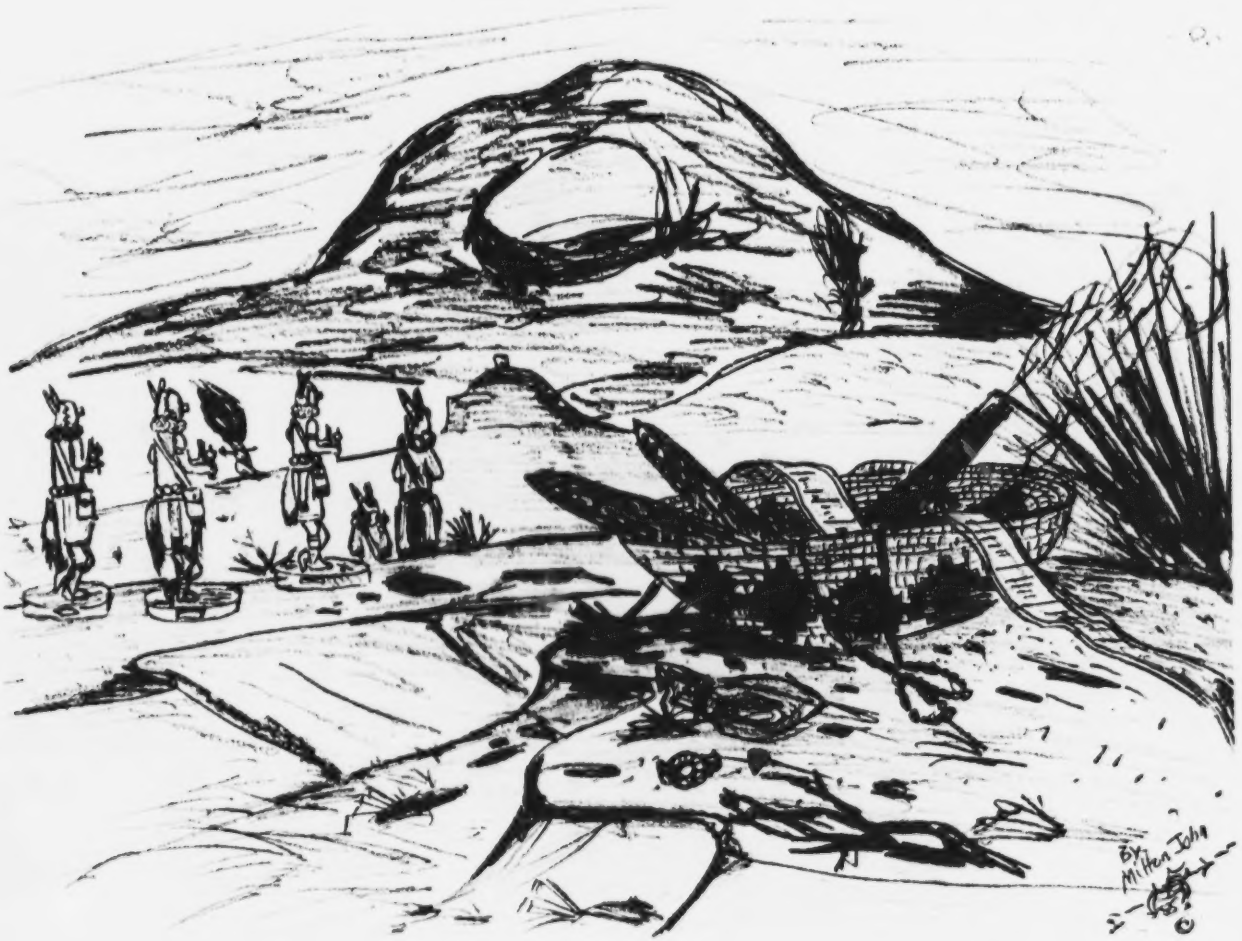
While shucking corn, if twin ears are discovered, Navajos feed them to the ewes so that they may produce twin lambs.

Owls hooting at night near one's home or a coyote crossing one's path foretell the illness or death of a relative or can also be a way of asking for a prayer. On the other hand, bluebirds are a symbol of health and happiness. On seeing one, a Navajo will make a wish for success and happiness.

Dushawn Denesto

This girl is grinding corn. The corn is used at a special ceremony held especially for the girl who will make it into a large cake. Corn is usually made into various types of bread and mush. There are two types of corn: one is the male type which is white and the other is the female which is yellow. Corn has to be ground upon a sheepskin. The stone which is placed on top of the sheepskin is most often used for grinding corn, but seeds, medicine and other things are also ground on it. All of these are very special to the Navajos in their traditions and ceremonies.

Jason Roan



Here is a picture of a Navajo wedding basket which is used in ceremonies. Also there is a hogan which was built a long time ago; Navajos used to live in these hogans. There are five yei bi chais shown. Yei bi chais are asked to dance when someone is very sick and may not live. This drawing shows some corn which the Navajos used to eat. The mountain is called the Window Rock. Years and years ago, there were many people who lived there.

Milton John

Homes

Navajo Hogans

A hogan is a round-shaped, one-room home. It is made from stones, logs, and mud.

There are four different kinds of hogans. They are called: the log cabin hogan (Tsinahdiidlin), forked hogan (Alch'i'adeez'a'), round hogan (Hoogan nimazi), and many-legged hogan (Hoogan bijaad lani). Each hogan is made in a special way and looks a little different from the other hogans.

Our people have a legend about the first hogan. It began when the first people came to the Earth and were looking for a place to live. As they were looking, the people heard a voice of the Great Spirit which told them that he had found a place for them to live.

The Great Spirit led them to a beautiful mesa where two hogans stood. The hogans were facing the east with an opening toward the rising sun.

Great Spirit asked the people not to go in yet because the hogans had to be blessed in a blessing ceremony before anyone could live in them.

The hogans were blessed with special prayers and songs. The people then moved into their homes.

Even today, Navajos still believe that hogans should face the East. They are still blessed in a ceremony because the blessing-way ceremony makes the home safe; it brings good luck, happiness, and plenty of food for the family.

This is why we still live in hogans today.

Miss Loretta Chase
Third Grade Teacher

Soon after the first people came up from the underworlds near La Plata Mountain (Dide'n't s ao), they talked about what they might use for shelter. A talking, invisible being told them where two hogans were located. The first people were told that before they could live in them the hogans must be blessed. Talking God (Haasch'eeltii) performed the blessing ceremony on the two hogans. Black God, First Man, First Woman, and others watched.

One of the hogans was of the male type and one was of the female type. The male hogan was the forked type and the female was the round type. The hogan blessing ceremony has at least four songs and sometimes twelve. Two prayers are required and sometimes six are used. The male hogans are blessed by marking the four directions with white corn. The medicine man first marks the point to the east, then the one to the north.

During the blessing of the female hogan, yellow corn is used to mark the main posts. The east post is marked first, then the west post, next the south post, and lastly the north post. The blessing continues outside the hogan starting with the layer of earth on the roof, then the back of the interior, next the center, and finally the stone just north of the door.

Every hogan must be blessed before it is lived in. The blessing makes the new home strong, beautiful, and good. A hogan which has been blessed will protect those who live in it. Also it will bring happiness, harmony, material goods, and children to its people.

The blessing ceremony makes the hogan a holy place that is fit for visits from the holy people. However, before any other ceremony is performed in a hogan, it is blessed again. This makes the hogan a good place in which to talk with the gods. It also makes sure that the ceremony will proceed without bad effects or evil influences.

The hogan is a very good home. It is warm in the winter and cool in the summer. It permits full use of every bit of space in it. But the Navajo hogan is not just a place to sleep and eat; it truly is a home and also a temple. It is a "being" which must be fed and kept strong and good.

Adrian Etsitty

This is a picture of a Navajo family home on the reservation. The hogan was one of the Navajo's favorite homes. It is a nice, warm, one-room home. Navajos can use the hogan for many purposes, or they can just live in it.

The outside surroundings usually include an outbuilding, sweat house, and livestock corrals.

Jefferson Begay

A hogan is never alone
for the sun or moon is always up above
to keep it company.

Marlene Yazzie

Weaving

The Navajo people have long been associated with weaving. Their work is much appreciated and sought after by collectors. The Navajo people probably learned weaving from the Pueblo Indians, and the craft really came into its own with the acquisition of sheep from the Spaniards in the seventeenth century.

The traditional Navajo loom is a rather complicated affair made up of a frame that supports the weaving and several sticks or rods that actually hold the piece that is being worked on. Since the traditional loom and weaving process are so complicated, the loom that will be described below is very simple to make and use, and makes a perfect classroom activity. If you are interested in the traditional loom, information on this subject should be available in most public libraries.

Materials needed for a simple loom:

Stiff cardboard	*String*
Yarn	*Large paper clips*
Scissors	*(for needles)*

Procedure:

Begin by cutting your cardboard to size. Any size will work, but we suggest using a small loom for your first project. Cut a slot in two opposite corners of the cardboard to hold the ends of the string. To facilitate weaving, it is helpful to bow the cardboard slightly. Take care that the cardboard does not become too weak to support the strings that are to be wrapped around it.

Tie a knot in the end of the string that you will be using and put the string into one of the slots in the corner of the loom. Now wrap the string all the way around the loom until your string reaches the other side of the loom. Try to keep your strings going straight vertically and about 4 mm apart. When your string reaches the other side of the loom, put the string in the other slot and secure it by tying it to itself or using tape.

You are now ready to begin weaving. The process is simple; you merely thread the warp (yarn) through the strings on the loom in an alternating over-under pattern. When you reach the end of your yarn or if you wish to begin another color, leave about 5 cm hanging off the side of the loom. This end will later be woven up the side of the finished product.

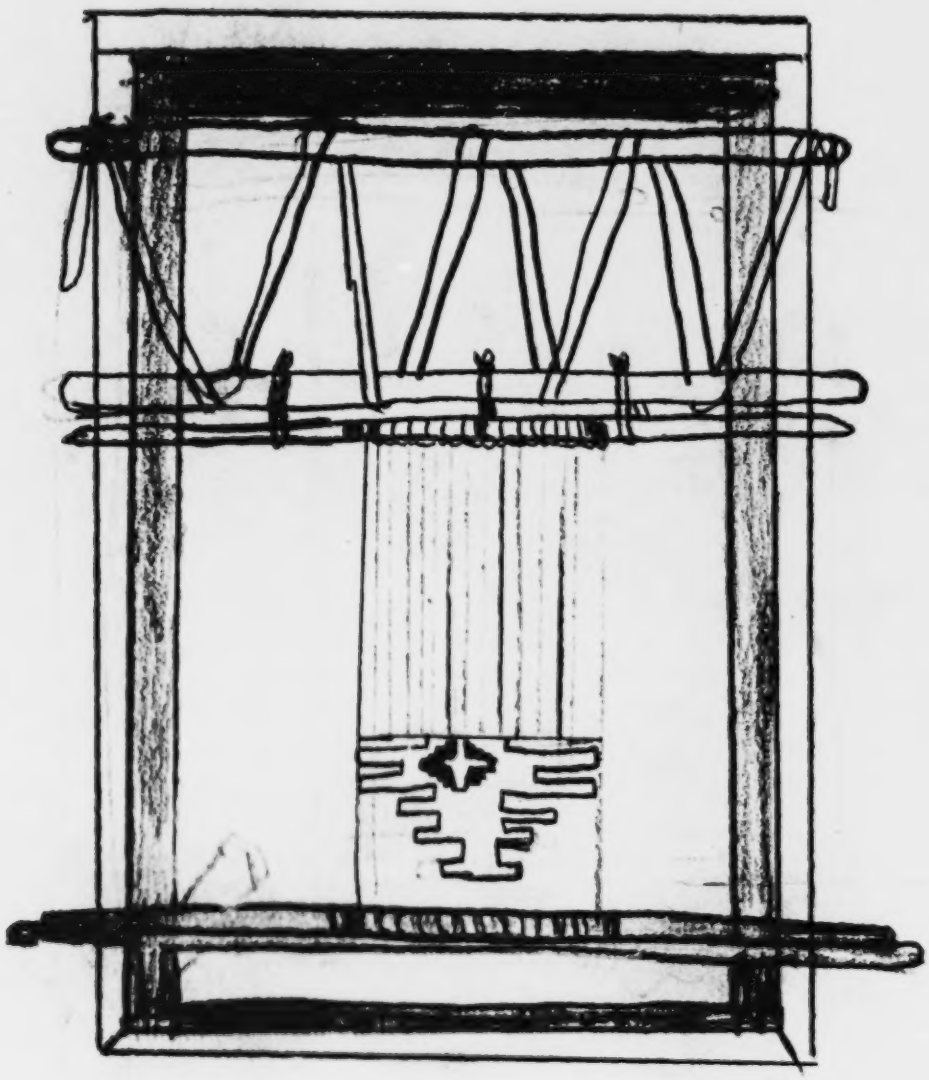
Take care while weaving on the loom to tape or press your yarn down to make a tight and straight weave. (A plastic fork works well for this purpose.) Also take care to keep the yarn loose enough when weaving or your rug will bow in the middle.

If you wish to do a pattern other than simple horizontal lines, you must weave the various colors at the same time. Where the two colors meet, loop the two pieces of yarn together between the vertical strings.

When you have woven as far as you can, or want to, use a small needle to weave the leftover yarn ends up the side of the rug and cut off any small ends. This will ensure that the ends won't unravel.

When all of the yarn ends have been woven into the sides, cut the vertical strings at the back and carefully tie them together to keep the yarn from pulling away from the piece. You may then leave some of the string on the ends to make a fringe.

You now have a finished woven rug! With practice and patience, even young children can become very good at weaving with this simple cardboard loom.



This is a Navajo rug, half done. The women sell the rugs and become famous weavers. The rug is held up by wooden poles and is woven of colored yarn which is dyed by the Navajo women. The older women teach the younger women how to weave these beautiful rugs.

Gloria Begay

This is a rug being woven and some yarn beside it. The wood for the loom comes from trees, and the yarn for the rug comes from sheep. The hogans are made from mud and long, big, round logs.

Vinson Brown

Here is a picture of some sheep grazing in the middle of the meadows. In spring they shear them and take the wool to the trading post where they trade it for money to pay for food, clothes, and shelter. Sometimes the wool is spun into yarn and made into Navajo rugs.

Irving Jones

Herding Sheep

Navajo boys still help herd sheep when they're not in school. Navajos use sheep for many things. They use the wool for rug weaving and the meat for food. Ever since I can remember, we've been using sheep so we have to take care of them.

When I take care of sheep, I get to go after them and watch for wolves that might eat them. If it is snowing or raining, I chase the sheep back in. During the winter it is hard; some sheep might freeze or starve. The snow might be deep, like in a ditch, and a sheep might fall into it and maybe break a bone. Then it will not move and it will freeze.

When winter is over, there will be green grass for the sheep. Their winter coat is very thick and it is time to shear the sheep. We tie up the sheep and get a pair of shears. Then we carefully cut off the wool. After the wool is cut off the sheep, they look funny. But they now have clean wool; their old coats were dirty.

In the summer, we build a summer house. When the sheep are thirsty, we take them to the windmill. After they drink, they eat grass and they get thirsty again. In the evening, we chase the sheep back to the corral. It's a lot of work, but it is also fun.

Sheldon Yazzie

I like to herd sheep and cattle
although I get very tired.

I have to herd them in a certain way.
Sheep and cattle are fun to have.

When I herd them, I have to watch them closely
or they will run off before I know it.

I can herd them with horses or on foot,
but either way I get tired and thirsty.

It takes a lot of work to take care of sheep and cattle,
but it is also a lot of fun.

Ophelia Woodie

Pottery

Pottery in ancient times was an essential aspect of life. Navajos used various designs to hold water and to cook. Perhaps equally important was the self-expression that a Navajo potter could find in his or her vessel.

Of course we all know how important self-expression is, and research has demonstrated the importance of manipulating the three dimensions. So here is an activity that your class might enjoy that will give them an opportunity to express themselves three dimensionally and perhaps give them a greater insight into the Navajo culture.

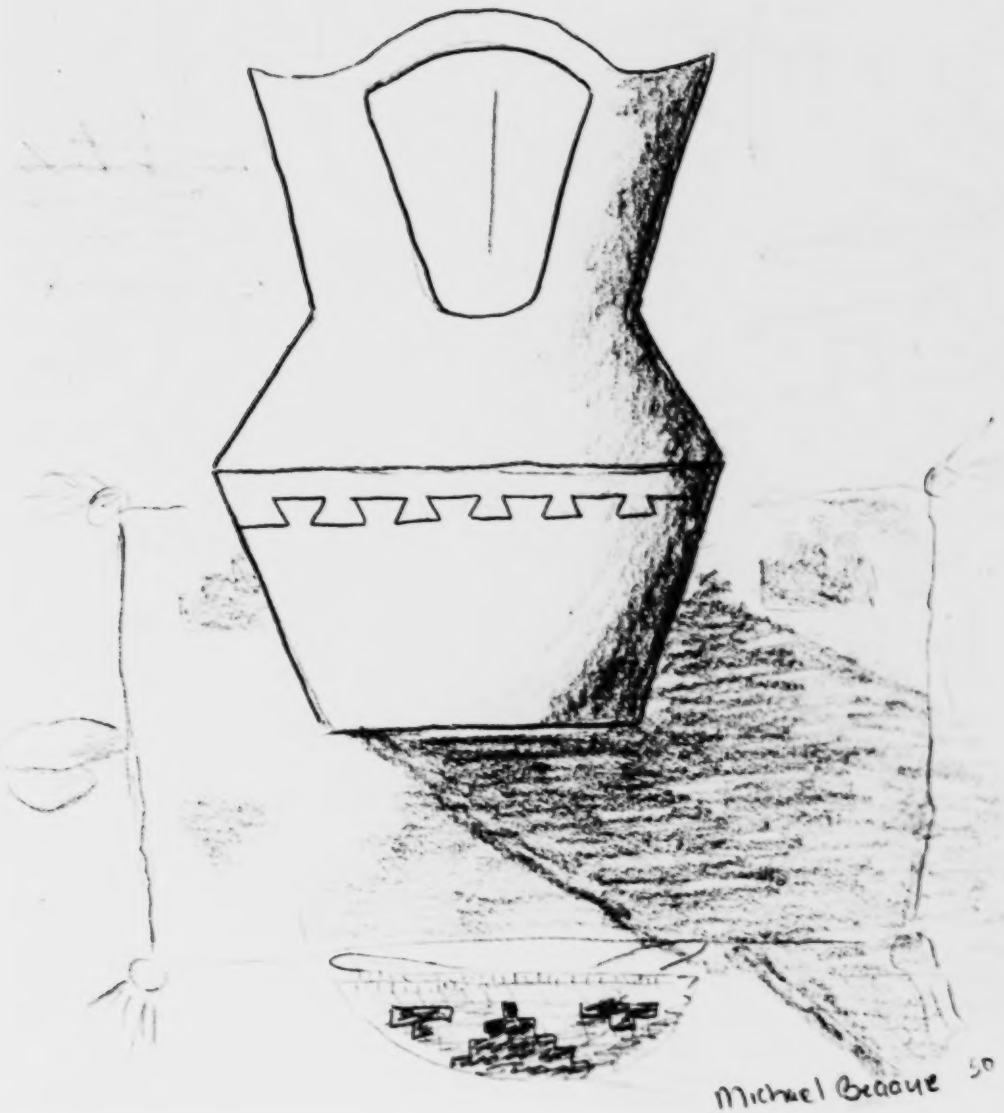
Materials:

Flour	*Water*
Salt	*Alum*
Paints	*Fingers*

Mix at least one cup of flour, one cup of salt, and one teaspoon of alum for each student. Add enough water to make the mixture plastic but not sticky.

There are three basic ways to form pottery. They are the pinch, coil, and slab methods. The flour dough clay seems to respond best to the pinch and coil methods. Make sure that your dough is stiff enough to be somewhat rigid; otherwise, your piece will tend to slump.

Form your vessel, and let it dry for at least a week before painting the design. Any design may be used, although Navajos and other western Indians favored geometrical designs and patterns in black or browns. Your potters may enjoy brighter colors and different patterns!



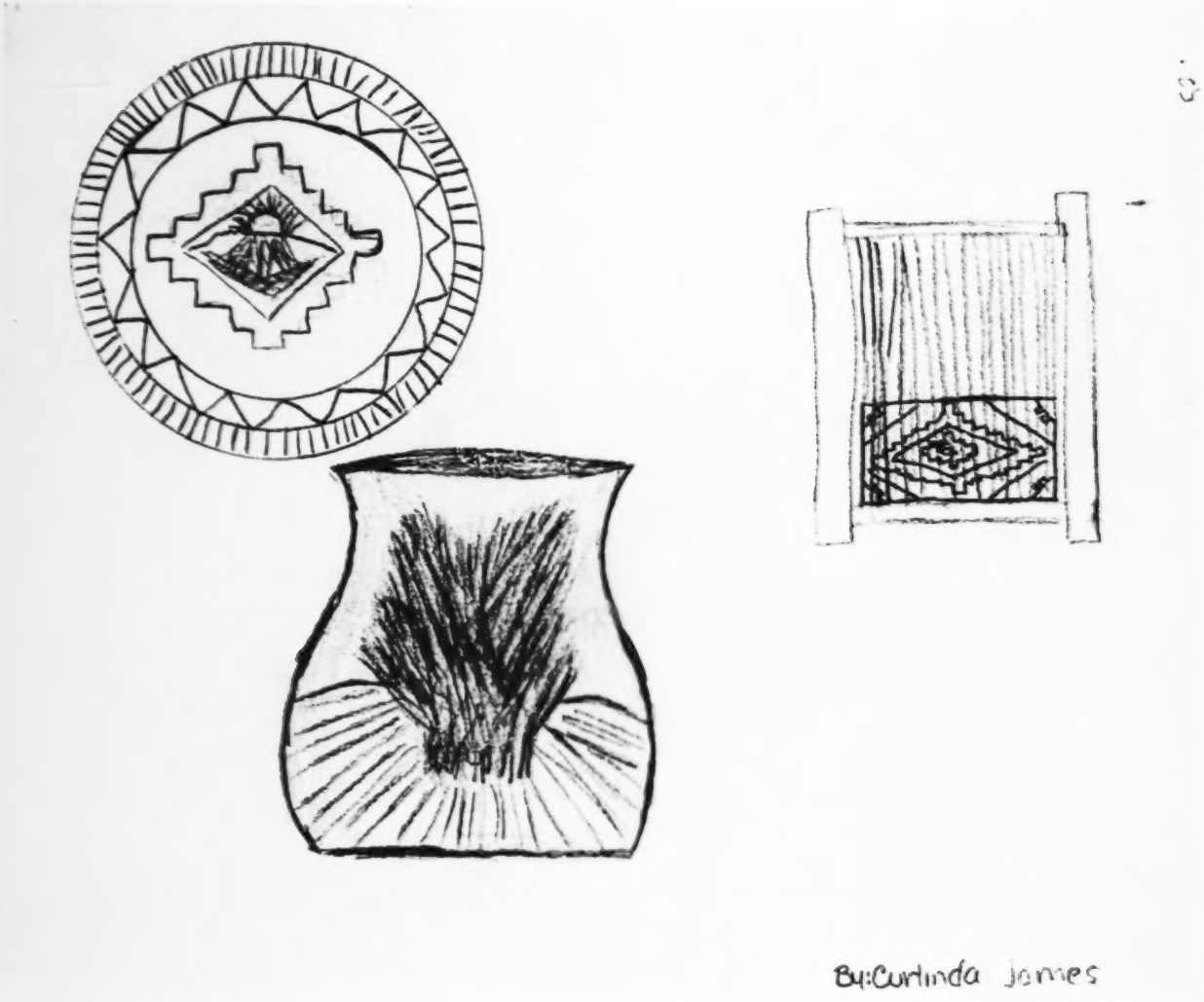
In this picture I have drawn a piece of pottery, a rug, and a Navajo basket.

Pottery is like a glass bowl and is used for many things such as carrying water.

Navajos started making rugs a long time ago. Today they still weave them and sell them to trading posts or pawn shops. Many women buy the yarn used to weave their rugs from the trading post.

Navajo baskets are used for weddings, yei bi chai dances and sometimes for other traditional dances.

Michael Begaye



This is a rug which is sometimes used as a blanket. Baskets are used for weddings and other traditional purposes. Pottery is used for holding water, as cups, or for other purposes.

Curlinda James

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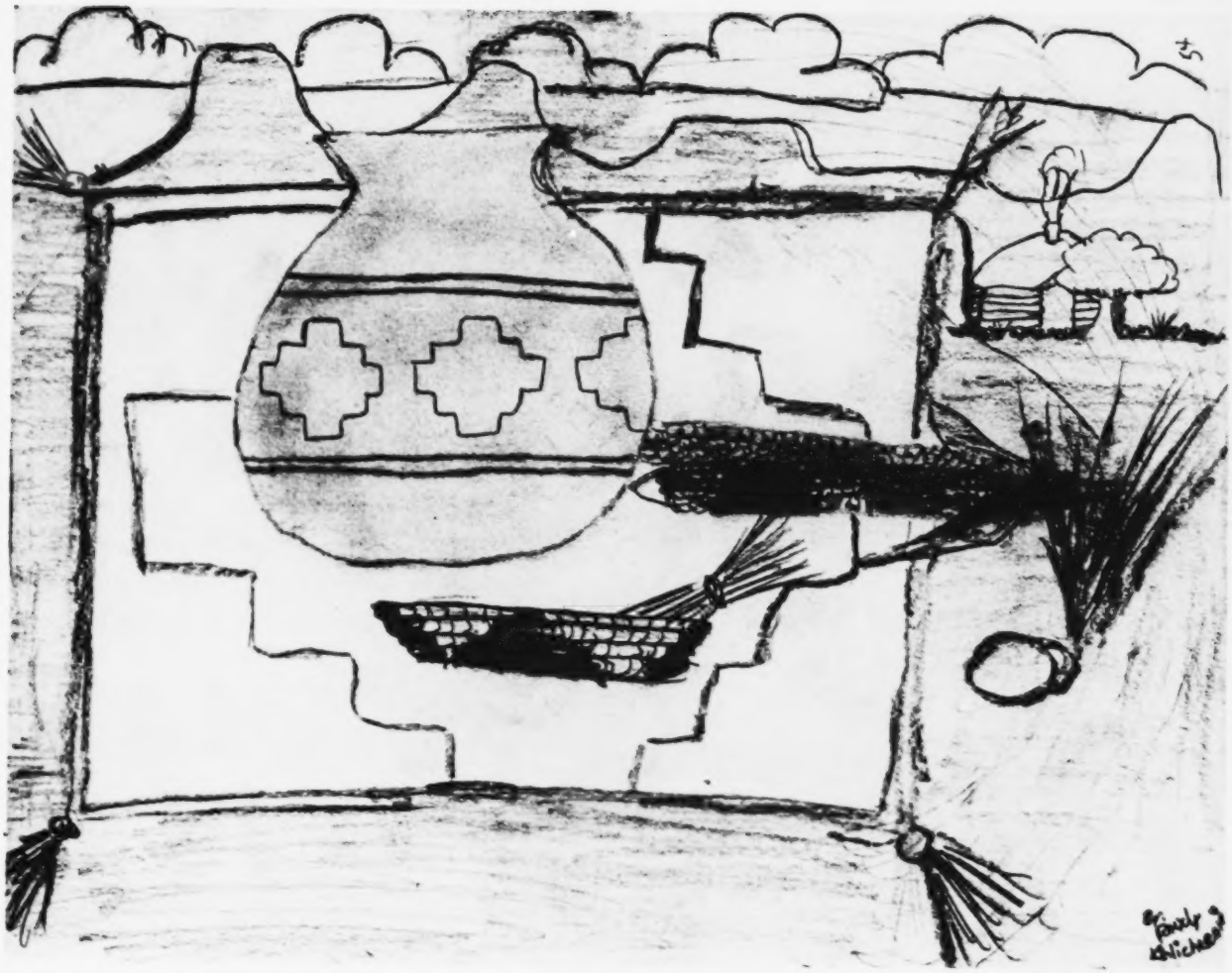
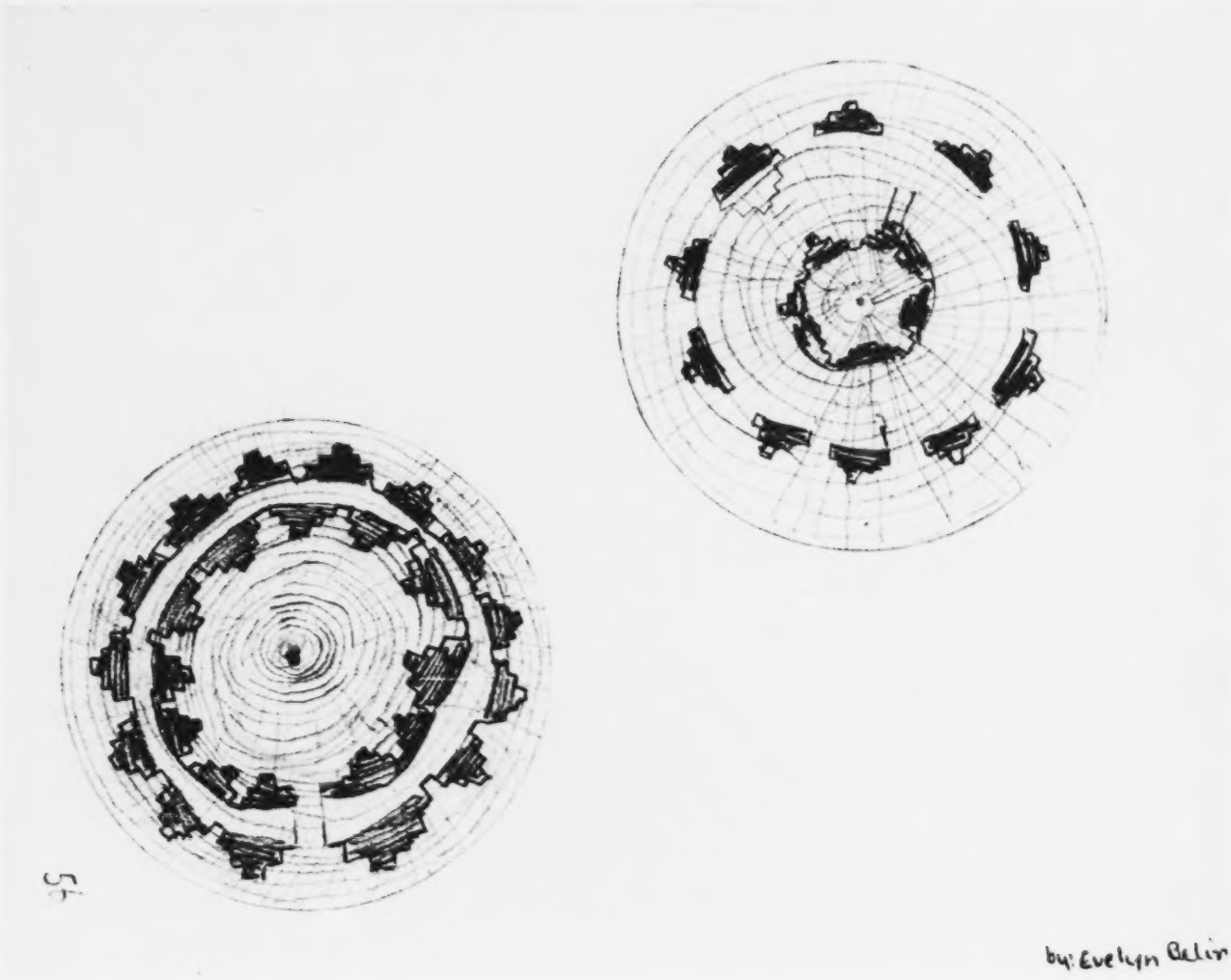


In this drawing are a piece of pottery, a rug, corn, and a Navajo basket. Pottery is sometimes used to hold flour. A rug is hung on the wall or could be used by a medicine man for placing his gear on. The Navajo basket is used for weddings and squaw dances. The corn is sometimes used by medicine men or sold.

Randy Kinlicheenie



by: Evelyn Bellin

These are Navajo baskets which are used in many ways. They are used in traditional weddings, for holding cornmush, and in many ceremonials. Navajos use them in traditional singing, squaw dances, and yei bi chai dances. The baskets are made out of straw. Some are even smaller than these drawings.

Evelyn Bellin

This is Indian jewelry made from turquoise which is very popular and expensive. These kinds of matched sets are made by silversmiths who are people who make jewelry. Turquoise jewelry is the most common type worn by the Navajo. It is made for ceremonies and traditional use.

Freda James

Sand Painting

Navajos use sand painting not only as an art form, but also in their religious ceremonies. Sand painting is, therefore, a very special type of art to the Navajos.

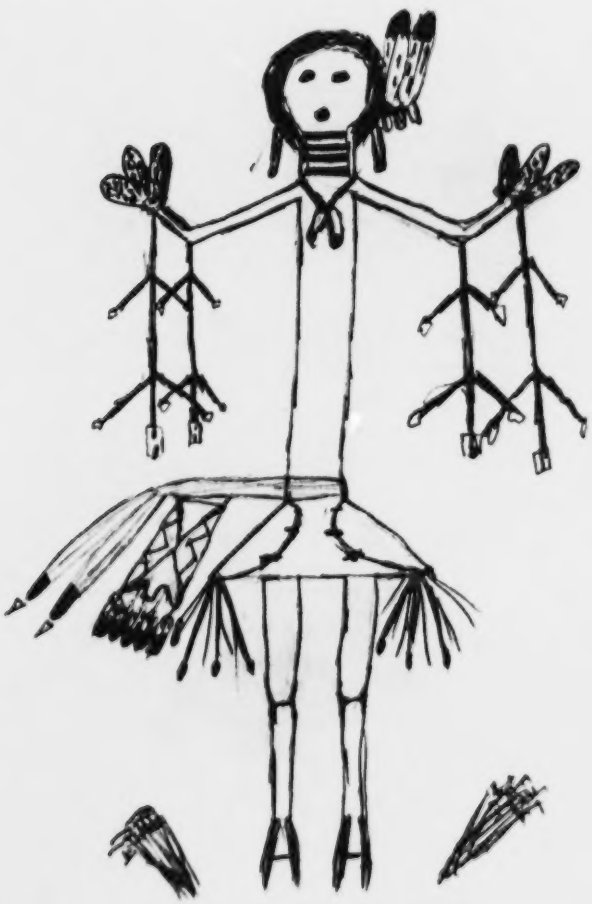
Materials:

Sand or gypsum	*Food coloring*
Cardboard or	
Particle board	*Glue*

Begin by mixing the food coloring and the white sand or gypsum in losable containers. Use a few drops of food coloring for each double handful of sand. Close the container tightly (w th the sand and coloring inside) and shake until the color is distributed evenly throughout the sand. Give each student a piece of cardboard or particle board. Then give each student or a group of students a bottle of glue and let them begin.

It is a good idea to draw your proposed pattern on the board before you begin so that you have a reference to go by. Apply a light covering of glue to your pattern, and then color it as follows. Take a small amount of the colored sand and sprinkle it on the glue until it is covered. Let the glue set for a minute and then apply glue to the next area on your pattern. Remember to color all areas of one color before moving to the next color.

Navajo designs are often stylized and representative, telling a story about a spirit or god. But as with all art, the artist determines the subject.



Toys from the Past

The assignment we gave our second graders was simple: Ask an older Navajo adult what toys he played with in the days before store-bought toys became commonplace. The answers we received reflected not only the culture, but the relative isolation of the child from the outside world. The resourcefulness of childhood was evident in the way these children used whatever was available to them to recreate their world through play.

Suggested Activities:

1. Give your students a similar assignment. Note similarities and differences in the answers received.
2. Give a writing assignment. Imagine that all the toys in the world vanished. What would you substitute for them in your play?
3. Have a variety of scrap materials available. Let the children experiment with creating a toy.

One of the toys Navajo children often built was a little wagon. They would find some wood for the bed. They would nail or wire the pieces together. They would take two sticks for the axles. They would nail jar lids to the axles for wheels. A wire to pull the wagon would be attached to the front axles. The front axle was movable so that the wagon would turn corners.

Timmy

My grandfather told me that when he was a little boy they used to make hogans and corrals out of sticks and mud. They would sometimes build a little fire in the hogans. Smoke would come out the top.

Terrie Mongram

My Dad said that when he was young, he would use the dried out bones from dead cows and sheep to make corrals. Then he would take sticks and pieces of wire and tie them up like hay. He made horses out of mud.

Rowena Jim

When my Dad was a little boy, he got a rock and made it into a bull. He got some wires and made them into a cowboy. He put the cowboy on the bull and played rodeo with it.

Rhiannon Gishey

My teacher, Mr. Beyal, told us how he used to make horses to play with. He would draw a horse's head on a cardboard box. Then he would cut it out and nail it to a long stick. Sometimes he would put a jar lid for a wheel on the bottom of the stick. Then he would ride the stick like a horse.

Marsha Yazzie

Food

Blue Cornmeal Muffins

1 cup blue cornmeal*
1 cup flour (sifted)
1/4 cup sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 egg
1/4 cup shortening

Mix dry ingredients; add egg, milk, and shortening. Blend for 5 minutes. Pour into muffin pan. Bake at 425° F. for 15 minutes.

Vinson Begay

Atole

2 cup boiling water
1/2 cup blue cornmeal
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup cold water

Mix cornmeal into 1/2 cup cold water. Slowly add to boiling water. Cook until mixture is smooth and creamy (about 5 minutes). Pour into mug (fill mugs about 3/4 full). Fill mugs with milk that has been heated to boiling point and salted. Makes 2 servings.

Vinson Begay

Tortillas

5 cups flour
1 tsp. baking powder
Dash of salt
1/4 cup powdered milk (optional)
Water (very warm) — about 2 cups

Sift all ingredients together, add water, and mix by hand. Knead dough until very firm. Dough should not be sticky. Break off a piece of the dough about the size of a medium baseball. Using a rolling pin, roll dough to the size of a very thin 9 inch circle. Put it on a very hot grill. Check every few minutes, and turn it over when the underside is brown. When both sides are brown, remove it from the grill.

This same dough can be used to make frybread. Follow the same directions, but use a frying pan with 1 cup of heated shortening in it. Put your rolled dough in the hot grease very slowly. Turn it over when brown. Check every few minutes. When both sides are brown, you have your frybread.

Vinson

**Note:* Blue cornmeal and other Indian foods are available by mail order. A free catalog is available from Casados Farms, P.O. Box 1269, San Juan Pueblo, New Mexico 87566.*

Navajo Tacos

Frybread (see recipe in this section) is used to make Navajo Tacos. You will need to prepare chili beans on the side.

After you have prepared frybread and chili beans, place one frybread on a plate and spread some chili beans on top. Sprinkle grated cheese over the chili beans, then top with shredded lettuce, dried tomatoes, celery, and onions.

Vinson

Liver Sausage

(A Navajo delicacy)

1 lb. sheep liver
1 medium onion
1/2 cup potatoes, dried
2 carrots, cubed
3/4 cup cream of wheat or farina
2 tsp. chili powder
1 tripe bag

Grind liver and mix with the rest of the ingredients listed. Stuff into the tripe bag. Close the bag with a skewer or tie with string so that the contents stay in. Boil for 1 1/2 hours.

When done, slice and serve hot.

Ronald Gishey, Jr.

Frybread

1 cup shortening
4 cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
Warm water (mix in enough with hands until mixture resembles biscuit dough.)

Heat the shortening in skillet. Roll the dough until it is about 1/8" thick, and shape it to fit your pan. When the grease is hot, put in the shaped dough. Fry on each side until both sides are golden brown, remove from grease, and let cool until warm. Then EAT!

Verona Meyers

Blue Ball

8 cups boiling water
4 cups blue cornmeal
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
3 tablespoons sugar
Water (to moisten cornmeal mixture)

Using a large pot, bring the 8 cups of water to a boil. In a big bowl, mix the cornmeal, baking soda, and sugar. Add enough water to moisten cornmeal mixture and shape into balls. Put the cornmeal balls into the boiling water to cook.

Verona Meyer

Kneeldown Bread

Scrape the kernels from fresh corn and grind on a metate. Make small packages of the mush by wrapping it in several layers of husks. Place the package in hot ashes. Cover over with fresh leaves and slightly moist dirt and then with hot coals. Build a quick fire over it and bake for at least one hour. After cooking, remove husks and eat at once.

Evangelita

Blue Corn Mash

Mix 1 cup of juniper ash with 1 cup boiling water. Put 3 cups water in a pot. Boil. Then strain the ashes into the water and stir. Add 4 handfuls of blue cornmeal. Stir. Boil for 30 minutes. Stir. Take off heat and stir. Serve cool with frybread.

Evangelita

Navajo Cake

Put 6 cups water in a pot. Boil. Add 4 cups precooked blue cornmeal, 2 cups precooked yellow cornmeal, 1/2 cup raisins, 1 cup wheat (sprouted), and 1/2 cup brown sugar. Blend well; dissolve all lumps. Pour into a baking pan and cover with foil. Bake at 250° F. for 4 hours. The cake must cook slowly.

Evangelita

Endings

The Navajos

We are thankful for everything. We are most thankful for life and things that are put on earth such as the animals. Animals are helpful in many ways.

The horse is useful for herding sheep and rounding up the cows. Horses are useful for other kinds of work and just for fun.

The sheep is the most helpful animal. We use the sheep for food and for a bed. The sheep's skin is our bed. In the summer, we use the sheep's wool for rugs after the wool has been colored with plant dyes.

We are thankful for the medicine man. To help us, he uses stones, plants, sand, feathers, and many other things. We are thankful for everything. We are most thankful for life.

Sharmaine Gishey

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